1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

431 In contrast to the enthusiasm invested in the preparations for the party, there was very
521 little emotional display at the meal itself, and several signs were observed of people being ill at ease. Thus it was necessary for Louis Mann repeatedly to urge people to go into the house and eat. Except among some old men, there was little sign of gaiety or festivity. As each man filed into the building he removed his hat and silently took his place. Conversation during the meal was slight.

431 Plans to revive the old fashioned potlatch dance were not fulfilled. A number of older
533 people were finally persuaded to line up and execute a few movements, but this behavior
173 was not spontaneous and the embarrassed laughter of the younger folks apparently disconcerted the dancers.

431 After having eaten, the guests gathered outside the house where two fires were built
416 against the chill of the evening. Five gallons of coffee were heating alongside one fire. Louis Mann several times distributed cigars and cigarettes around the two circles of guests as well as oranges to the children, who were enjoying a common time. After the dishes had been washed by the women of the Wolf ab, the guests continued the house to retrieve their cups, plates, and tableware. Considerable confusion resulted in this distribution and many
[429] people were unable to find their own objects. Even Louis Mann lost several of his own utensils, all of which suggests that some people, who had not come with tableware, went home with utensils not belonging to them.

On the day following the potlatch meal, a number of Crow people returned to Louis' house where his wife and her sisters distributed packages of food, tins of jam that had never been touched, fruit, and cake left over from the party.

The second potlatch on July 13 was designed as a return party by the Crow moiety. Louis placed himself in charge of the preparations and was assisted by his father-in-law. The cooking and serving were undertaken by Dorothy Flower, her cousin, and the ethnographer, who was conventionally designated as a Crow. The food was cooked in the residence of a white trader and transported to the potlatch in Louis Mann's boat. In Louis' house it was kept warm on the stove. The potlatch this time began at one o'clock in the afternoon and was completed by six o'clock. Behavior held to the same emotional tone that was described for the first party except that considerable amusement was furnished by the several white trappers who attended while intoxicated but who caused no trouble. No attempt was made to introduce dancing, although a social dance in Lord Tom's house was announced as a part of the festival and took place later in the evening.

523 Music. The only musical instruments played by the Kaska are the violin and guitar.
[illegible] Many men are accomplished "fiddlers," while most boys and girls can play accompaniments
177 on the guitar. All musical ability is patiently self taught and is motivated by the individual's personal desire to learn. A new tune is generally picked up by listening to a Tahltan Indian master play it. The Tahltan, in turn, learn new melodies by listening to the recorded words and music. Such double, and sometimes triple, transmission by ear results in a melody often being considerably altered from its original form. The most popular tunes include: "I Know What It Means to be Lonely," "Take Me Back to Tulsa," "My Dear Darling," "Wabash Cannonball," "Red River Valley," and "You Are My Sunshine." These are not only played on dances but are often sung or whistled around town and camp. Local Tahltan

youths have improvised words to "Wabash Cannonball" which contain the refrain "Yukon cannonball." The prevailing theme of most of these songs is nostalgia, expressed as a longing for a loved and remembered place or an absent woman. When played by the Indians, all of these melodies are transposed to a minor key, which further accentuates the nostalgic quality of the words and music. An undercurrent of gaiety and vivacitamous is introduced by the four-fourths time in which the tune is rendered. A number of people also own portable phonographs (locally called "gramophones") on which a variety of music, ranging from rock to ballet, is played.

Young men sometimes improvise short songs around commonplace activities. These are also sung in a minor key. Thus Nisla, while preparing to go hunting, sang of how he was going to get a moose. Song composition becomes freer when young men are intoxicated. Drunk in Old Man's camp one night, Peter Tom strummed his guitar and improvised a song around an incident that had occurred earlier that day. The words went:

> I quit blind this morning
> I don't want to die.
> Oh-o-hoh-o . . . [yelling].

Dancing. One of the most popular recreational features are the dances marking summer evenings in Lower Post. Early in the summer, with many young people in town, such dances are held almost nightly. They are attended principally by young people, married or single, and by one or two white men. When the American soldiers were in the Kaska area a number showed up at these dances until the Army declared Lower Post out of bounds. The music is furnished by a violinist and one or two guitarists. Dances begin around mid-night, when it is starting to get dark, and may continue to three or four o'clock in the morning. Later in the summer, as the nights get longer, dances start earlier. When a group of people want to dance they first ask the recognized musicians to play. The players receive no remuneration for their entertainment, although soldiers and white men sometimes collect a purse for them. The next task is to find a place to dance. River Joe's home, an unfinished trading store, and a deserted bunkhouse belonging to one of the trading companies were all well regarded as dance houses in 1944-45. Most of the time such accommodations are made available without charge; several times, however, River Joe sought to collect money from visitors attending dances in his house. He defended his behavior by speaking of the public dance hall at Trutch Lake to which admission is charged. Few people paid the so-quoted fifty cents.

After a dance has been announced people congregate outside the building, while the players take their places at the back of the house near a lamp or candle. Several times go endeavored before sufficient dancers venture inside the house or before people feel relaxed enough to go on the floor. Boys who have been drinking get the dancing underway more quickly, the evidentiary of liquor, beer, or wine always making a more spontaneous and lively party. Within the dance house, the sexes line up along opposite walls of the building. When a man wishes to select a partner, he crosses the room and stops before the girl of his choice. She rises and, looking away from her partner, begins to dance with him. A girl continues to exert her face throughout the dance. The men hold his partner lightly and

535 rarely is there any conversation between the couple. When the music has stopped, the girl turns swiftly and returns to her place while the men joins his friends across the room or else stands outside the building until the next number is begun. Sometimes women too go outside. Men frequently dance while wearing their hats and, unless it is very warm, girls continue to wear their coats. Both sexes often dance holding an unlighted cigarette in their hands. In form, Kaska dancing may be described as a one-step, but some men in leading proceed in a monotonous walk-like step that has earned the soldiers' appreciation, "Lower Post shuffle." The Tahltan do a square dance, but few Kaska Indians know this form. Waltzes are rarely played and are not well danced. White trappers when intoxicated are fond of introducing a variant of the one step. Calling, "woodpecker!" they execute the step by bringing the heels forcefully on the floor instead of shuffling. Intoxicated young Indian men sometimes dance in this manner, and drunken musicians create considerable amusement by speeding up the tempo of playing, forcing everyone to dance rapidly. Occasionally a white man will fiddle for a dance. His playing is slower than the Indians' and he frequently interchanges the one step with waltzes, schottisches, and polkas to which the natives do not dance confidently.

One of the primary sources of enjoyment in dancing comes from the movement and [378] rhythm. There are, however, other functions of a dance which contribute to its popularity. [379] The first of these is the excitement which, even without the aid of alcohol, serves to break down the conventional reactions of the people and, like the gambling games, leads to some [380] of the most intensive social interaction in the society. Dances are also popular because they are among the few situations facilitating sexual interaction. Soldiers and civilian construction workers employed on the Alaska Highway recognized this function and often enlisted dances to recruit Indian girls for sexual purposes. Complaints by traders and ministers led the provincial and Mounted Police to pay surprise visits to dances and order out of town all strangers found there. Indian dances are also visited by the police to detect evidence of [381] drinking. Dances found in progress after midnight, Saturday, are ordered closed under the terms of a provincial law forbidding Sunday dancing.

525 *Gambling.* In contrast to dancing, not much time is spent in gambling. Card games, such as poker and blackjack, are played during the summer and winter but are customarily low stakes than the stick games, which take place for a few consecutive nights each summer. When interest has been aroused in such a game, someone proposes that it be played and word travels through the community. Gradually people make their way to the designated spot. Gambling generally takes place some distance from town, since experience has taught the Indians that the conduct ceremony and traders are likely to be displeased if boys awake by the sound of the drumming.

The paraphernalia for gambling ceremonies also were stolen; very sticks were given willow branches. These sticks, each about a foot long, are peeled and one end sharpened so that they can be thrust into the ground. The next task is to choose two sides. This is done informally, but the men who is most prominent in the choosing becomes the captain of his team. Each team usually consists an even number of men—from four to six. A youth is then [382] designated to manage the "drum," which may consist of a frying pan, a four gallon oil tin, or a tambourine drum specially prepared for gambling. The drum stick is a plain piece of black willow.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

A

B

C

D

Water, Rock, and Sunset Scenes

[END PLATE 10]

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

517 the smooth snow of a frozen lake. Games, feasts, and potlatches involved larger scale social interaction.

534 The tambourine drum furnished the standard musical instrument. The best tanned drumheads came from the raw skin of a young moose, caribou skin being inferior because it split too easily. The rawhide was spanned across one side of a circular wooden rim, babiche lines running from the edges of the skin to tie underneath the cover. These converging lines also made a useful handle to hold the instrument. The size of drums varied but a potlatch instrument sometimes attained three feet in diameter. To tighten the drumhead a player carefully heated it over a fire. Although the Upper Liard Indians [524] made rattles for children, such instruments were not regarded as musical instruments. Whistles, carved from willow, also constituted toys.[a]

533 Repetitious, wordless chants that expressed feeling and amused or entertained listeners shared a place with true songs containing words. The repertory included potlatch songs, gambling songs for stick games, love songs to serenade a sweetheart, mourning songs, and magical war chants. A shaman sang his own song while curing, and so did a man working with a maul.

535 The Upper Liard Indians did not dance in a circle. Rather people ranged themselves in a row and, with the arms partly raised but not directly participating in the movement, 293 rocked the body up and down while keeping time with the feet.[b] Potlatch dancers painted their faces grotesquely and costumed themselves in sheep and wolf skins, half-finished coats, absurd headgear, and sheep horns—all provoking considerable amusement for the spectators. Wolf's-head masks might be worn by members of that society.

526 The people liked to engage in contests of strength and skill, including throwing, arrow shooting, wrestling, and racing. Adults and children played with balls made from a mass of skin sewn into a tanned-skin container. Target shooting with a bow demanded a small stick thrust in the ground as a target. In one winter sport boys threw sticks in the snow trying to make them skip like flat stones thrown across the surface of water. Young men frequently competed to see who by using his hands alone could break the hind-quarter bone of a beaver. Occasionally a girl also joined the competition. The secret of breaking a beaver bone, according to an informant, lay in twisting it with great force [524] rather than trying to break it in half. Riddles are said to have been told for amusement but none could be obtained.[c] Wrestling enjoyed wide popularity among young men but was specifically prohibited between two brothers-in-law. Young boys ran foot races on the snow of a frozen lake. Canoe races could not be recalled but an informant believed

[a] A Kaska informant knew the Tlingit to possess plank drums and to use rattles in dancing. According to Drucker, the Tlingit (including the Chilkat) used single-hand tambourines, suspended wooden, and plank drums. Drucker, *Culture Element Distributions: XXVI, Northwest Coast* (1950), 197–198.

[b] Among the Tlingit "while dancing, the participants stand close together and scarcely move out of their tracks. . . . The dancing really consists of rhythmic movements of the hands, arms, head and entire body above the waist. . . . Time is measured by the beat of the drum. . . ." Men and women danced, painting the face with red or black pigments and also using masks. Jones, *Study of the Tlingits of Alaska* (1914), 144.

[c] "It is interesting to note the presence of riddles among the Takhtan, a feature that has not often been reported for North American Indian tribes." Teit, *Go Taltan* (Athabaskan) *Work* (1922), 486.

6:Hemignanan E-5 (1943-1945)1954 MD12 Dakota MD12
Upper Land
Dance Rings

into the fire. The recipient would cry out, "I win this!" A host gave presents with an eye to what he had already received, the more elaborate objects being presented to people who had given him good gifts in the past. A person who had given poorly received a relatively low valuable present.

When the gifts had all been allocated, a washable curtain was erected in the dwelling, supported from two poles held by members of the host's moiety. Members of the potlatcher's group retired behind the curtain and decorated themselves with masks, feathers, and animal skins for dancing.* Members of the opposite moiety painted the faces of the would dancers. Costumes did not include commercial wigs or aprons. When they were ready the dancers called for the curtain to be removed and began dancing to the rhythm of drums and potlatch songs. After one moiety had performed the guests allowed their faces to be painted and in turn also danced. Crow dancers sometimes ran their hands upward along the faces of the Wolf people, breaking the latter's hair away from the face. Celebrations lasted as long as four days, large meals being served every evening. In the night people gambled far into the morning. Competitive potlatch-giving contests were also featured at potlatches, winners receiving their rewards in presents and other useful prizes. Besides marking puberty, marriage, and commemoration of death, potlatches constituted a ritual means of reducing hostility between moieties. Thus if a member of the Crow side had killed a Wolf he might avoid the open resentment of the other moiety by assembling wealth and inviting members of the offended side to attend his potlatch. The exchange of ceremonial civilities between the two parties wiped all memory of the offense.

Dance Rings Kaska. Averaging about 12 or 13 inches in diameter, the tambourine drum of semi-tanned moose hide furnished the chief musical instrument of the Kaska people. Only shamans decorated these objects with symbols representing the sky, moon, and stars. Along with the drum people provided rhythm with bells, made from hollowed caribou horn, or moose hooves threaded on a piece of line from which they could be swung. For amusement people made willow whistles in the spring. Apart from potlatch chants and songs for gambling, love, and mourning, people sang to secure good weather and favorable hunting and fishing. Shamans have specific, and presumably lucky, moose, ground hog, caribou, and beaver songs. All chants were generally wordless and in essence consisted of a few syllables repeated over and over in a minor key. The refrain of a potlatch song follows:

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

Songs might be recorded in dreams or learned from one's father. People did not sing war songs.

Dancing provided a popular source of amusement. Sometimes the son of a headman led dancers in a circle while pounding a drum. During the potlatch people performed and chanted while covered with back masks, the features of which were outlined with chart.

* See the Tlingit potlatch school masks and other materials to represent the war animals. Swanton, *Social Conditions, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 450.